

Fort Davis

National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Curriculum Materials Grades 2-5

The Life of a Soldier in the 19th Century



Cavalry Company at Fort Davis circa 1875

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Teacher Notes: Life of a Soldier in the 19th Century

Topic: Life of a Soldier in the 19th Century

Standards and Objectives:

Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
113.4 -17,18,19	113.5 -16,17,18	113.6 -22,23,24	113.7 - 4,5,25,26,27
Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
110.4 - 3,4,8,9,13, • 14,20	110.5 - 3,4,9,13, 14,20	110.6 -4,5,9,10, 11,13,15,21	110.7 - 4,5,9,10, 11,13,15,21

Materials Needed:

Copies of soldier information sheets: *What Was It Like to be a Soldier Back Then?* And *Being a Soldier in the U.S. Army: Listening to the Bugle*, as well as worksheets *Interview A Soldier*, *Soldiers*, and Bugle call sheet

Strips for Memory, pre-cut and in envelopes to keep them straight

Copies of *Vocabulary Drill—Military Words* instructions; file folders for the Vocabulary Drill game; one copy of the Vocabulary game words for each group

Optional: mail a blank CD or cassette to Fort Davis NHS and the staff will send you at no cost an audio copy of the bugle calls played at the fort.

Optional: books that show pictures of soldiers from the late 19th century

Optional: order from Fort Davis NHS a copy of the 30-minute video on the history of Fort Davis (cost \$19.95 less 20% teacher discount + shipping)

Lesson Activity:

Students read information sheets about a soldier's life as a whole class, in small groups, or individually. If students know soldiers today or are familiar with military operations, they can add to the discussion comparing how things are different or similar for soldiers today.

Activities and Projects:

* **Memory** Directions for teacher:

- Cut apart the sentence strips about soldiers and put in an envelope.
- Five students sit in a circle to form a group and receive an envelope.
- Each student has different sentence fact from the set. Students should not let anyone see the sentence they are holding.
- One student starts by reading his or her sentence. The student sitting to the left repeats it and then reads his or her sentence. Continue around the circle. Each student repeats the sentences that have been said before, then adds the new one.
- When students have played with several different sets of sentences, have them go back to their seats and write a paragraph telling things they learned about a soldier's life. They can also draw pictures.

*** Vocabulary Drill—Military Words**

Students do not need to know the meanings beforehand. They will learn some by playing the game. Divide the class into groups of three. Pass out one set of the military word cards, which have been cut apart, to each group of three students. The answer sheets should be put into a file folder for the Officer to hold during the game.

*** Interview a Soldier**

Give each pair of students a copy of one of the information sheets about soldiers. If time is limited to do this activity, tell students it will be a very short interview, and instruct them as to how many of each type of question to ask. For example, 2 closed questions, 1 open, and 1 probe.



Cavalry Company at Fort Davis, circa 1875

FORT DAVIS RETREAT PARADE SOUND PROGRAM

Plays daily at 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m.

Retreat Parade was a military ritual that may have appeared out of place on the dusty frontier. Despite the grand appearance, Retreat was just another part of a soldier's routine. The ceremony served a dual purpose—it was part of the ever-present discipline of the enlisted man, and it provided an opportunity for roll call and inspection. For the soldier, it marked the end of yet another day filled with drills and work details like hauling water, chopping wood, and caring for government stock.

Let us journey back in time to a late summer day in 1875. The low light of the setting sun casts shadows across the parade ground, where officers are inspecting companies of the 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 25th U.S. Infantry in front of the row of barracks. The soldiers are in full dress uniform, their polished brass insignia glistening in the sunlight. Also present is the 25th U.S. Infantry Regimental Band, ready to strike a note upon completion of inspection of the soldiers. The evening Retreat Parade is about to begin.

Along officers' row, some of the ladies and children turn out to watch the martial proceedings from their shaded verandas. All is quiet and the signal to commence is given...

Trumpets: "Assembly" and "Adjutant's Call"

The adjutant posts the guides then instructs company commanders to bring their companies to "parade rest." He then commands the band to "sound off."

The band plays "Hail Columbia" as it marches the full length of the assembled soldiers and back to its original position.

Trumpets: "Retreat"

The evening gun is fired. Company commanders order their companies to "present arms."

Trumpets: "To the Colors"

The flag is lowered, followed by the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner." The soldiers stand in formation for

review. The adjutant then receives reports from the first sergeants of all companies. After they are accounted for, the adjutant reads out the day's general orders. He announces the death of former President Andrew Johnson and the honors to be paid him by the garrison.

Note: "The Star Spangled Banner," with a different arrangement, was not adopted as the National Anthem until 1931.

Review the Troops

The commanding officer commands the review to begin. The band, playing "The Young Recruit" followed by "Garryowen," marches to front and center, then remains in place. The soldiers march twice around the parade ground, first at a cadence of 100 beats per minute and then at double time—165 beats per minute. After the soldiers arrive at their original position and the band finishes playing, the commanding officer instructs the adjutant to dismiss the parade.

Dismiss Parade

The parade is dismissed; the band continues playing until the parade ground is cleared.

The music and commands of the U.S. Army ceased to echo through the mountains when Fort Davis was abandoned in 1891. As you walk about the grounds of Fort Davis National Historic Site, look at the buildings through the eyes of the officers, enlisted men, wives, and children who made its history.

This sound program was recorded in cooperation with the staff of the United States Army Artillery and Missile Training Center, Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1964. Music was played by the 77th and 97th Army Bands.

Bugle Calls

The post commander held a wide range of authority in the conduct of the garrison. The daily schedule of bugle calls was one of his tools in regulating the activities of the soldiers. Although the schedule would vary from season to season, the routine generally did not. The result was a regimented lifestyle that centered around the bugle call as a measure of time.

This schedule of calls is extracted from schedules used at Fort Davis during the 1870s and 1880s. They are presented to help visitors envision Fort Davis as an active military post. Differences between the historic army time schedule and this time schedule are noted in the description of the bugle calls.

8:15 — Assembly of Trumpeters	The first signal for the soldiers to awake from their blissful slumber, this call historically sounded between 4:45 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., depending on the season.
8:20 — Reveille	- Upon the last note of this call, the flag was raised, the morning gun was fired, and all men were out of their bunks and getting dressed for morning roll call.
8:25 — Assembly	- The men stood in formation outside their barracks for morning roll call.
8:30 — Stable Call	- Soldiers in the cavalry put on their white canvas stable clothing and reported to the stables to feed and groom their mounts. This was historically done right after morning roll call, about 6:15 a.m.
8:45 — Water Call	- Cavalry troopers watered their horses.
9:00 — Mess Call	- Breakfast usually consisted of bread and bacon, mush and molasses, or pancakes, and plenty of hot, black coffee. This signal ordinarily sounded between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
9:30 — Fatigue Call	- Those soldiers assigned to a morning work party reported to their assignments for fresh air and physical exercise. Typical work details included building repair and construction, cleanup of the post grounds, gardening, cutting firewood, and hauling water.

9:40 — Sick Call	- Soldiers who were ill reported to the hospital dispensary for examination by the surgeon. Those who were truly sick were given a dose of “quinine and pills” and excused from work for the day. Army surgeons were always watchful for malingerers—those who faked sickness to escape work.
10:00 — Assembly of Trumpeters and Dress Guard Mounting	- This was the first call for “Guard Mount,” or the changing of the 24-hour guard detail.
10:05 — Assembly of Guard Details	- Men assigned to guard duty assembled in front of their respective barracks.
10:10 — Adjutant’s Call	- The guard details marched to the guard house where the Guard Mount ceremony took place. This historically took place around 8:00 a.m.
10:30 — Drill Call	- Soldiers who were assigned to morning drill assembled.
10:35 — Assembly	- Soldiers practiced battle formations and marching. New recruits learned more basic skills.
11:00 — Recall	- Morning work parties ceased at the sound of this call.
11:30 — Recall	- Morning drill ceased.
11:45 — First Sergeants’ Call	- Company first sergeants reported to post headquarters with their “Morning Reports,” which gave the number of their men sick, on guard duty, on drill or fatigue, or on special assignment.
12:00 — Mess Call	- Dinner was the main meal of the day—typically consisting of stew, or roast beef and potatoes, or corned beef and vegetables, plus coffee and bread.
1:00 — Fatigue Call	- Those soldiers assigned to afternoon work details had the opportunity to work off their dinner.
1:30 — School Call	- School resumed at the Post Chapel after dinner for children.
1:50 — Boots and Saddles	- This signal alerted cavalrymen to put on their riding boots and saddle their horses.
1:55 — Drill Call	- Soldiers who were assigned to afternoon mounted drill assembled.
2:00 — Assembly	- Cavalrymen practiced battle formations and exercised their horses. New recruits were taught the basics of horsemanship.
3:00 — Recall	- Afternoon drill ceased.
3:10 — Stable Call	- Cavalrymen repeated the morning care of their horses.
3:15 — Recall	- Afternoon work parties ceased at the sound of this call.
3:30 — Water Call	- Horses received their afternoon watering.
3:55 — Assembly of Trumpeters	- As the preparatory call for Retreat Parade, “Assembly” usually sounded twenty minutes before sunset.
4:00 — Assembly	- The entire garrison turned out for the Retreat Parade ceremony. The actual lowering of the flag and playing of Retreat were at sunset.
4:25 — Assembly of Trumpeters	- This was the preparatory call for “Tattoo.”
4:30 — Tattoo	- Historically played at about 9:00 p.m., “Tattoo” was the signal for enlisted men to prepare for bed and to secure the post.
4:35 — Assembly	- This was the last roll call of the day.
4:45 — Extinguish Lights	- By the last note of “Taps,” all lights were extinguished, all men were bedded down in their bunks, and all loud talking ceased.

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Student Activity: What Was It Like to Be a Frontier Soldier?

What Was It Like to Be a Frontier Soldier?



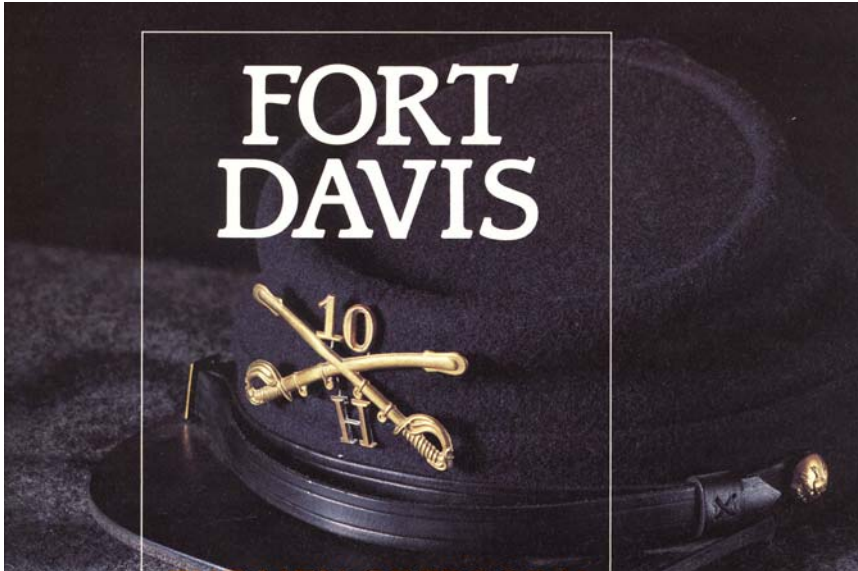
9th Cavalry at Fort Davis

Men joined the army for many different reasons: for adventure, for a steady job with regular pay, or to get an education, among other reasons. Women were not allowed to be soldiers.

Many new soldiers were former slaves or immigrants to the United States, and the army was one of the few jobs available to him. Men signed up for five years and could not leave until their enlistment expired. Some, however, deserted. Soldiers were paid \$13.00 dollars per month. Does that seem like a lot of money? Soldiers also received uniforms, which did not always fit right. Being made of wool, the uniforms were hot and itchy. Soldiers had to pay a laundress to wash their uniforms. Under their uniforms, they wore long cotton underwear—even in summer!

Soldiers received daily rations of food that included bacon or pork, fresh or salted beef, bread, beans, and coffee. If they wanted other food, they had to buy it with their own money at the commissary or post trader's store.

Soldiers were assigned to a group called a company or troop, and they wore the same letter and number on their uniforms to identify their company or troop. Soldiers lived in barracks, where bunks had mattresses and pillows filled with hay. Each soldier kept his



This soldier's hat shows that he was in Troop H of the 10th Cavalry

personal items in a footlocker near his bunk. Rifles were locked on a circular rack. Squad rooms in barracks were heated by wood heaters. Soldiers who were in the army the longest got to choose bunks by a window or heater—can you imagine why?

Soldiers had many fatigue (work) duties. Jobs included constructing buildings, telegraph lines and roads, hauling water, caring for horses and mules, chopping wood, cleaning out privies or outhouses, tending the

vegetable garden, guard duty and military drills. Other details included guarding stagecoaches and wagon trains, mapping the area, scouting for Indians, searching for water, and guarding railroad crews. However, one of the most important jobs of Fort Davis soldiers was protecting travelers, freight wagons, and U.S. mail coaches traveling on the San Antonio to El Paso Road.



Soldiers in the barracks enjoy some leisure time.
Fort Davis NHS Photo (1989 Living History Event)

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Student Activity: Being a Soldier – Living by the Bugle Calls

Being a Soldier in the U.S. Army: Living by the Bugle Calls!



The bugle moved soldiers to a daily schedule—like your school bell today. Imagine being a soldier at Fort Davis! You listen for the bugle—you do not have a watch. Bugle calls play all day long. The bugle tells soldiers where to be and what to do. During the day, you hear many bugle calls at the fort, and each call has a different tune.

Your day begins before the sun comes up, with the first bugle call of the day—*Reveille*. It means get out of bed, get dressed, and go outside for roll call and the flag-raising ceremony.

Before *Mess Call* for breakfast, cavalymen (horse soldiers) go to the stables to care for their horses and the infantry (foot soldiers) clean the barracks and organize equipment. After breakfast, the bugle sounds for *Sick Call*. If you are sick, you go to the hospital for examination by the army doctor. The bugle soon sounds again for *Fatigue Call*, which means it is time to report for work like cutting

wood or hauling water.

There is even *School Call*, telling children who live at the fort that school is beginning.



Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry drill at Fort Davis in the 1870s.

Drill Call summons soldiers to the parade ground to practice drilling, like you see in the photo at left.

You do not want to miss *Mess Call* for lunch! Afterwards, you go back to work when the next bugle call sounds. All afternoon you hear the bugle. Around 5:15 p.m. the bugle call you have been waiting for finally sounds: *Recall*. Afternoon work duty is over! You look forward to supper, even though it might only be bread and coffee, or leftovers.

You make your uniform look its best, because just before sunset *Assembly* announces the flag-lowering ceremony. Afterwards there is a little time later to relax before bed time so you play checkers, cards, or your harmonica.

The army even tells soldiers when to go to bed! About 9:30 p.m., *Tattoo*, another bugle call, reminds you to prepare for bed. Finally, the sound of *Taps* orders soldiers to blow out the kerosene lamps and go to bed. Bet you are tired, soldier!



Student Worksheet for:

- (1) Being a Soldier in the U.S. Army: Living by the Bugle Calls
- (2) What Was it Like to Be a Frontier Soldier?

After reading the information sheets about soldiers, discuss or write the answers to the following questions on a separate sheet:

1. Compare the day of a soldier to your school day. How is it similar?
How is it different?
2. Would you like to have been a soldier at Fort Davis in the 1880s? If so, would you have chosen to be a cavalry or infantry soldier?
3. Why was the bugle so important? Remember, there was no such thing as a wristwatch, and a pocket watch was too expensive for soldiers.
4. Why do you think women were not allowed in the U.S. Army at that time? In your opinion could women have done the jobs if they had been allowed in the army?
5. Do you think soldiers ever felt homesick or lonely, even though there were soldiers around all the time? Explain.
6. Make a list of feelings the soldiers might have had throughout their day and situations that might have caused those feelings.
7. How would it feel to have almost the entire day directed and watched over? Do you think this was necessary? Why or why not?
8. Many soldiers in the U.S. Army in the 19th century were illiterate (that is, they could not read or write), so the army held school for soldiers at night. If you had been a soldier, do you think you would have chosen to go to school at night in your free time to learn?

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Student Activity: Being a Soldier – Interview a Soldier

Interview a Soldier

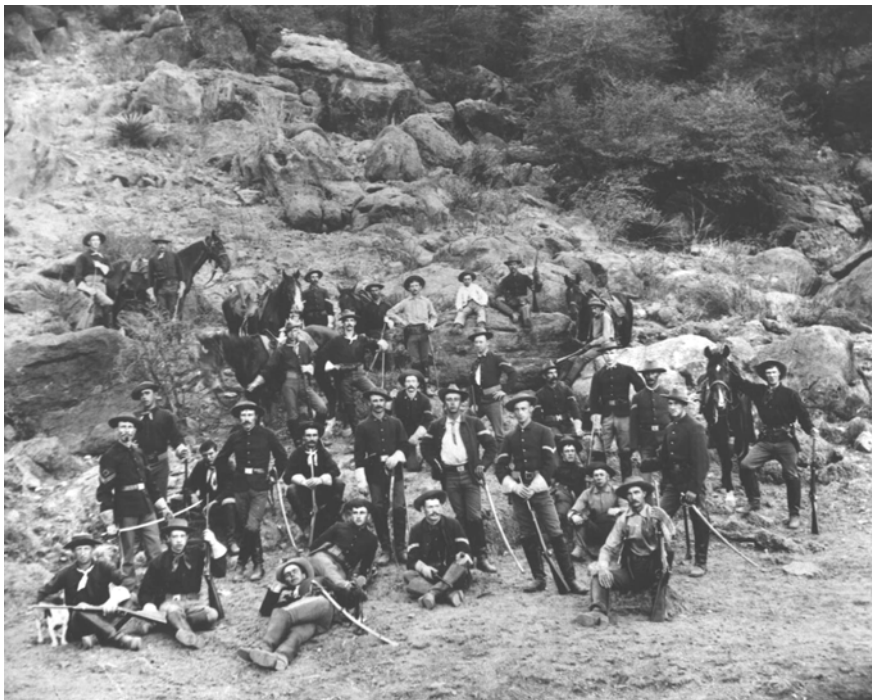
Have you ever watched an interview on television? Interviews are important ways to gather historical information from a primary source. One person asks questions while the other answers. There are three types of questions the interviewer can use to encourage people to talk about themselves, their life, and their opinions.

Closed questions start with the words such as who, what, where, and when. The person answering them gives specific answers that are factual. Usually the answers are very short, only perhaps a word or two.

Open questions start with the words why and how. A person can say much more when answering.

Probes are used to encourage people to tell more than what they have just said, to elaborate. Probes begin with, “Tell me more about...” or “How do you feel about it?”

An interviewer uses all three kinds of questions.



Choose one of the soldiers in the photo at left and imagine interviewing him. Work with another student as a partner to write an interview of the soldier, using the information sheets about soldiers. Include all three types of questions. Include facts, but also use your imagination and think how the soldier might have felt, what his situation might have been before coming to the fort, what his personality might be, what things he might enjoy about being in the army, and what things might be hard for him.

Practice reading and acting out your interview. The interviewer will include a short introduction of his soldier guest to the audience before beginning the interview. Present it to the class.

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Student Activity: Being a Soldier – Memory Game

Memory Game sentences (to be cut apart by teacher and distributed to students).
Set 1

Infantry soldiers marched on foot. Cavalry soldiers rode horses.

Drills taught the soldiers how to march, how to work together, and how to use weapons.

Soldiers belonged to a group called a company or troop.

The bugle calls told everyone where to be and what to do at certain times each day.

A soldier always wore his army uniform when he was on duty.

Set 2

Working at the fort was called Fatigue Duty.

Soldiers jobs included cutting wood, hauling water, and constructing buildings.

Soldiers had dress parades and inspections in front of their officers.

Soldiers were sometimes on guard duty 24 hours with no sleep.

Some soldiers went to school at the fort in the evenings.

SET 3

Soldiers lived in buildings called barracks.

They wore wool uniforms and probably only took a bath once a week.

A soldier's bunk had hay in the mattress; he kept his footlocker nearby.

26 soldiers slept in the one room with no privacy.

The rifles were locked on a round rack standing up in the middle of the barracks.

Set 4

Some men joined the army for adventure, others for the steady job.

Soldiers signed up for 5 years and were paid \$13 dollars a month.

Soldiers ate two meals a day in the Mess Hall.

A soldier could earn extra pay by doing extra jobs.

Sunday was a day off and soldiers liked to rest, play cards or even play a game of baseball.

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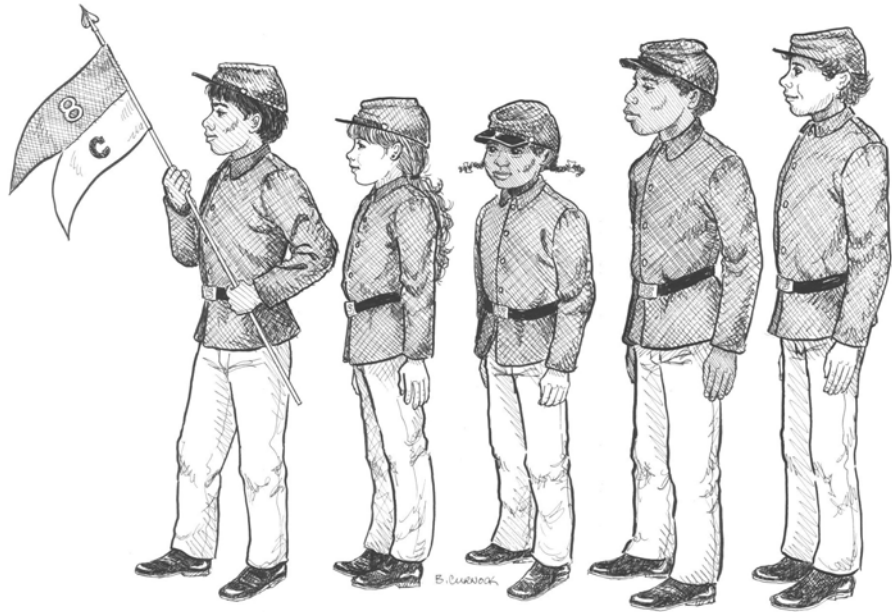
Curriculum Materials Grades 2-5

Student Activity: Being a Soldier – Vocabulary Drill

VOCABULARY DRILL—Military Words

Soldiers had to train and practice to be fit and to learn to work together. They had daily drills for this purpose.

By playing this game, you will be doing a different kind of drill. You will hear some of the words that soldiers used every day. If you play more than once, it will be like a drill—or practice. How many words can you remember after the game?



Rules for the Game:

One student is the officer. The officer gets the answer folder.

Two students are soldiers who sit facing the officer.

Put the vocabulary cards with words face down in a stack at the center of the table.

The first soldier turns up a card and reads the word. The officer looks for the word in the folder and calls out three possible meanings of the word.

The soldier guesses which he or she thinks is the correct meaning. The officer tells if correct or not. If correct, the soldier gets one point. Put the card away or on the bottom of the stack.

The second soldier turns up the next card and repeats the procedure.

Continue play until the time limit is up or all cards are played.

Variation: Officer can just call out one meaning for the word on the card— sometimes the correct one and sometimes not. The soldier can answer true or false.

barracks	campaign	carbine	cavalryman
civilian	commissary	company or troop	cooper
desertion	enlist	enlisted man	farrier
fatigue	footlocker	garrison	guardhouse

infantryman	inspection	magazine	mess hall
patrol	privy	quarters	ration
recruit	regiment	reveille	sentry
taps	tattoo		

VOCABULARY DRILL—Military Words

1. BARRACKS

place animals were
kept at the fort

building soldiers lived in

a rack above the bed

2. CAMPAIGN

a series of actions used
to accomplish a goal

a friend

to pay money in advance

3. CARBINE

front part of a wagon

a light rifle for cavalry
soldiers

a soldier's belt

4. CAVALRYMAN

person who shoes horses

person who has permission
to be absent

horse soldier
(a soldier who rides a horse)

5. CIVILIAN

a section of the hospital

one in charge of a troop

someone not in the military

6. COMMISSARY

the bag soldiers used to
carry their supplies

building where the army
kept food supplies

report filled out by officer

7. COMPANY or TROOP

a group of soldiers

an agreement not to desert

a badge awarded for
good behavior

8. COOPER

person who cooks

person who makes and
repairs wooden barrels

person who sets traps
for animals

9. DESERTION

leaving duty station without
permission

a search party

a form of punishment

10. ENLIST

list of duties that a soldier
performs

an old uniform

to join the army voluntarily

11. ENLISTED MAN

an Apache	<u>a soldier in the army</u>	a captain
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12. FARRIER

<u>one who shoes horses</u>	one who measures distances	the stalls in the stables
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13. FATIGUE

end of the day	<u>work duty for a soldier</u>	name for a soldier's trunk
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14. FOOTLOCKER

a metal box filled with lots of shoes	a place where horses are kept	<u>a large wooden box where a soldier keeps his personal belongings</u>
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15. GARRISON or POST

prison	<u>another name for a fort</u>	place where soldiers eat
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16. GUARDHOUSE

<u>place where the guards hang out; also the fort's jail and the fire station</u>	lounge and dance hall for the officers	place where food is stored at the fort
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17. INFANTRYMAN

soldier who is too sick to work	a soldier who takes care of infants and children	<u>foot soldier</u> (<u>soldier who marches on foot</u>)
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18. INSPECTION

shelf over the soldier's bunk	<u>checking by a set of rules or a standard</u>	the way soldiers are paid
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19. MAGAZINE

<u>place where ammunition is kept at the fort</u>	place where soldiers ate	library where books and magazines are kept
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20. MESS HALL

place where soldiers played and were allowed to make a mess	<u>place where soldiers ate meals</u>	time out room for soldiers who broke the rules
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21. PATROL

fuel used to light fires	<u>walk around to check security</u>	a kind of large rifle
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22. PRIVY

a place outside to go to the toilet

soldier who raises the flag

a card game played by soldiers

23. QUARTERS

the buttons on uniforms

tools used to weigh things

assigned place to live

24. RATION

ammunition

something solid

certain amount of food given to a soldier

25. RECRUIT

a soldier's uniform hat

a new soldier

water station

26. REGIMENT

a large military unit made up of troops or companies of soldiers

a long table for soldiers' meals

an officer's house

27. REVEILLE

another name for a soldier

a kind of stew that soldiers ate

bugle call to wake up

28. SENTRY

soldier on guard duty

soldiers in charge of the horses

soldier who plays the bugle

29. TAPS

bugle call for lights to go out at night

bugle call to wake up in morning

bugle call for lunch

30. TATTOO

badge sewn on uniforms

bugle call to tell soldiers to go to their barracks at the end of the day and prepare for bed

a soldier's cap worn in winter